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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION

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Christmas Tree Production in Western Montana in 1941 a/

From a small beginning less than 15 years ago, the commercial production of Christmas trees in western Montana has developed into an annual harvest supplying about one fifth of the national consumption and furnishing seasonal employment to hundreds of people. In addition to the trees, which are the principal product of this growing industry, there are springing up what may be termed "by-products industries" which utilize branches and trimmings from the stumps for decorative evergreen ropes, wreaths, sprays, and garlands. Various types of novelties such as corsages and decorated cones are also produced.

Since 1927, when Montana Christmas trees were first shipped to outside markets, there has been a steady upward trend of the industry, and in 1941 the total estimated production amounted to 3,082,650 trees. In 1940, 2,338,350 trees were produced; in 1939, 1,967,350; in 1938, 1,676,000; in 1937, 1,534,500; and in 1936, 1,262,500. For the years prior to 1936 comparable production statistics are not available. In other words, during the period from 1927 to 1935, inclusive, this industry had been growing up almost unnoticed outside of the particular communities involved.

As in previous seasons, the principal producing areas for 1941 were Lincoln County, which contributed 1,378,250 trees; Flathead County, with 1,125,250; and Missoula County, with 192,450. The leading shipping points were Eureka in Lincoln County and Kalispell in Flathead County, at which the number of carloads was identical, amounting to 214 each.

Practically all of the trees shipped from the State were Douglas-fir. Shipments went to all parts of the United States, but the bulk were sold in the Middle West with Chicago the chief destination. The most distant point east where carloads of trees were shipped was Philadelphia; and south, Dallas, Texas; and west, San Francisco.

Further details concerning the origin of the trees in western Montana are given in the attached table.

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a/ Prepared by C. N. Whitney, Division of Forest Products.

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Shipments of Christmas Trees from Western Montana in 1941

County	Railroad Shipments 1/								Truck shipments 2/	All shipments 3/
	Great Northern		Northern Pacific		C.M.St.P. &P.		Total			
	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Trees	Trees
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Flathead	219	1,040,250	-	-	-	-	219	1,040,250	85,000	1,125,250
Granite	-	-	11	52,250	-	-	11	52,250	8,000	60,250
Lake	-	-	13	61,750	-	-	13	61,750	-	61,750
Lincoln	287	1,363,250	-	-	-	-	287	1,363,250	15,000	1,378,250
Mineral	-	-	4	19,000	11	52,250	15	71,250	6,000	77,250
Missoula	-	-	11	52,250	28	133,000	39	185,250	7,200	192,450
Powell	-	-	-	-	7	33,250	7	33,250	-	33,250
Ravalli	-	-	8	38,000	-	-	8	38,000	15,700	53,700
Sanders	-	-	20	95,000	-	-	20	95,000	5,500	100,500
Total	506	2,403,500	67	318,250	46	218,500	619	2,940,250	142,400	3,082,650

1/ Origin of trees is as follows, by counties and shipping stations: Flathead County: Kalispell, 214 cars; Whitefish, 4 cars; Olney, 1 car. Granite County: Drummond, 11 cars. Lake County: Ronan, 7 cars; Polson, 6 cars. Lincoln County: Eureka, 214 cars; Libby, 41 cars; Rexford, 21 cars; Fortine, 9 cars; Troy, 2 cars. Mineral County: Superior, 9 cars; Alberton, 6 cars. Missoula County: Missoula, 39 cars. Powell County: Deer Lodge, 7 cars. Ravalli County: Darby, 8 cars. Sanders County: Plains, 20 cars.

2/ Truck shipments (142,400 trees) represent a compilation of estimates made by district rangers and supervisors of the Flathead, Kootenai, Lolo, Bitterroot, Cabinet, and Deerlodge National Forests.

3/ Origin of the total production (3,082,650 trees) is approximately as follows: State of Montana forests, 130,470 trees (4 percent); national forests, 405,880 trees (13 percent); private lands, 2,546,300 trees (83 percent).

The 405,880 trees cut on national forests originated as follows: Bitterroot, 26,717 trees; Cabinet, 6,185 trees; Flathead, 4,428 trees; Kootenai, 347,070 trees; Lolo, 21,480 trees. The average stumpage price received for these trees was 3.2 cents each. The average price received by the State of Montana for trees cut from State forests was 3.9 cents each.